



Healthcare policies and programmes in practice Mental Health & Physical Health Parity

Policy

Within the Five Year Forward View NHS Planning Guidance 2016 - 2021 document, a Mental Health IAPT access standard is introduced. Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) services¹.

In Practice

Where?

This pilot is in conjunction with the Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) team, North East London Foundation Trust based at Goodmayes Hospital. The IAPT team works across Barking & Dagenham and Redbridge Clinical Commissioning Groups.

What?

self management uk presented their online self-management course to the IAPT team, who had identified a significant percentage of clients referred to them each month who have long-term health conditions. The IAPT team are trained and skilled in dealing with depression and anxiety but felt there was a gap in helping clients manage their physical health condition which impacted on their mental state.

Why?

The aims of this pilot were to:

- ✓ Create an innovative primary care service that responds to the complex needs of people with co-morbid mental and physical health needs
- ✓ Deliver better health outcomes for patients
- ✓ Improve service delivery and user experience

Amongst the monthly referrals within the IAPT services, 25% have one or more comorbid long-term condition. Upon investigation, possible trigger for these referrals to treat low-level depression or anxiety was a recent diagnosis of a long-term health condition.

self management uk

A recent Kings Fund report² states: *“Integrated care initiatives in England and elsewhere have paid insufficient attention to the relationship between physical and mental health. This aspect of integration should be a major part of efforts to develop new models of care in NHS England’s vanguard sites and elsewhere. The case for seeking to support physical and mental health in a more integrated way is compelling, and is based on four related challenges: high rates of mental health conditions among people with long-term physical health problems... (and) limited support for the wider psychological aspects of physical health and illness.*

Collectively, these issues increase the cost of providing services, perpetuate inequalities in health outcomes, and mean that care is less effective than it could be. The first two issues alone cost the NHS in England more than £11 billion annually.”

The online programme from **self management uk** follows similar cognitive behaviour therapy techniques to those the IAPT team use with clients. It reinforces the behaviours and techniques the clients can use to manage their health conditions.

The programme can be used within the therapy sessions if necessary. In addition, clients can share their learnings with friends, family members or work colleagues if they need additional support and understanding of their challenges.

How?

1. **self management uk** trained NELFT therapists on the online programme
2. Together we designed the referral process to provide secure login codes to the clients
3. We met with and communicated to the General Practitioners and surgeries in the area advising them of the new service available through the IAPT team
4. We engaged our system to monitor the progress and engagement of clients via mentors through the online programme
5. We agreed outcome measures we wished to focus on which identify the impact on reduction of health service usage by clients. This will prove the programme’s effectiveness and hopefully secure further funding to benefit further populations

Progress

This pilot will initially benefit 120 clients referred to the IAPT team.

The concept has been extremely well received by the IAPT team and associated GP Surgeries within the area.

We believe the integration this pilot models between mental and physical health conditions is sustainable and effective.

The results of reductions in healthcare usage will not be known until 12 months after completion of the programme by the clients. An update to this document will be produced upon examination of the results.

References:

¹ “Achieving Better Access to Mental Health Services by 2020”, Department of Health Publication.

² “Bringing together physical and mental health, a new frontier for integrated care”, The Kings Fund, March 2016.